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ABSTRACT

Begun as a remedial reading center with ESEA Title III funds, the Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction (ECRI) has developed into a reading resource center with remedial, teacher training, research, and information service programs. Emphasis is on preparing teachers to work with disabled readers and on research in remedial reading. Although it was originally designed to serve one school district, the ECRI has expanded its activities over eight Rocky Mountain states and is staffed by 12 persons including teachers, a librarian, and a University of Utah coordinator. Children admitted to the Center receive careful diagnosis, are referred to outside specialists as needed, and are given individually prescribed remedial programs. Demonstration classes and inservice workshops emphasize preparation of teachers to overcome reading disabilities in classroom and clinic situations. Special programs offered in cooperation with the University of Utah are aimed at extending knowledge of reading instruction to reading specialists in a wider area than could otherwise be reached. Parent programs acquaint parents with their children's difficulties and remedial lessons and prepare them to extend Center activities into the home. Research conducted at the Center has provided evidence of program success and is disseminated through the Center library. (MS)

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Model Programs

Childhood Education

Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction

Salt Lake City, Utah

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATION

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Model Programs

Childhood Education

Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction

Salt Lake City, Utah

A cooperative venture in reading research and training reaches a nationwide audience

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
Elliot L. Richardson, *Secretary*
Office of Education
Terrel H. Bell, *Acting Commissioner of Education*
OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
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FOREWORD

This booklet is one of 34 in a series of promising programs on childhood education prepared for the White House Conference on Children, December 1970. The series was written under contract by the American Institutes for Research for the Office of Economic Opportunity, and the Office of Child Development and the Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Within the broad area of childhood education the series includes descriptions of programs on reading and language development, the disadvantaged, preschool education, and special education. In describing a program, each booklet provides details about the purpose; the children reached; specific materials, facilities, and staff involved; and other special features such as community services, parental involvement, and finances. Sources of further information on the programs are also provided.

What programs are most effective for teaching a child to read? How can parents help their children learn to read? How can reading teachers improve their skills? How can educators keep informed about innovations and research in the field of reading? The Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction (ECRI) in Salt Lake City, Utah, is conducting programs to answer these and related questions.

ECRI began in the mid-1960's when a statewide study of remedial reading programs indicated that they were ineffective for approximately one-third of the students. At the University of Utah, portions of the statewide study were replicated within the Granite School District in Salt Lake City, revealing a parallel situation: although approximately 65 percent of the students were performing successfully in the remedial programs, about 35 percent were making less than 5 months' progress in reading in a year-long period of instruction. To try to meet the special needs of these poor readers, a remedial reading center was established in the Granite School District in the summer of 1965. During the 1965-66 school year the activities of the reading center were expanded through an Elementary and Secondary Education Act, title III, grant. By the time Federal funding was terminated in the

summer of 1970, the Center had become a cooperative endeavor of the Granite School District and the Salt Lake City School District, in close association with the University of Utah.

Now financed solely by State and local funds, ECRI seeks to improve reading instruction from kindergarten through grade 12. In 5 years it has developed from a small remedial reading program in one school district into a large reading resource center for remedial reading instruction, teacher training programs, research, and dissemination of information. Although a limited number of students are still given instruction at the Center, the emphasis is on teaching teachers, who can then reach a much larger number of students. There are also parent training programs. ECRI carries out a number of reading research projects and publishes the results. These and other research findings, as well as a variety of additional information about reading, are published in ECRI's widely distributed newsletter. The Center's library circulates an extensive collection of reading-related materials.

That ECRI has been able to accomplish so much during its short history is due to the extraordinary cooperation among three main groups: the Granite School District and Salt Lake City School District, which work together and contribute funds and personnel

to ECRI, and the University of Utah, which has maintained close ties with the Center since its founding. This cooperation has provided the ideas, resources, and teamwork that have enabled ECRI to make major contributions to the field of reading.

FACILITIES AND STAFF

The Center serves eight Rocky Mountain States but concentrates its activities in the Granite School District, the Salt Lake City School District, and contiguous areas. It operates on an annual budget of about $159,000, with funds obtained from the State and participating school districts, mainly the Granite and Salt Lake City School Districts, both of which are located in metropolitan Salt Lake City. Together they include 131 schools and over 98,000 students.

The Center was originally housed in the basement of an elementary school in the Granite School District. In the summer of 1970, the Center moved to the Grand View Elementary School in the Salt Lake City School District, a school with approximately 13 classrooms, a large library, and an auditorium complex, in addition to a full basement and miscellaneous rooms.

The Center's operation for 1970-71 is controlled by a five-man board of directors composed of two persons from the Granite School District, two from the Salt Lake City School District and one from the State Department of Education.

Personnel at the Center include the director, an assistant director, a University of Utah coordinator, one librarian, four clinic teachers, two area demonstration teachers, and one secretary. Another demonstration teacher works half-time and an additional secretary, three-fourths of the time. The services of the reading specialists of the Granite and Salt Lake City School Districts are also available to the Center.

ECRI'S PROGRAM

Within the Granite and Salt Lake City School Districts, children who have particularly serious reading problems are referred by their schools to the remedial reading clinic of ECRI. These are children who have been left in educational limbo by the typical remedial reading program. In sharp contrast to the progress of 5 months or less ordinarily made by many such students, the clinic works to help students triple their previous yearly reading gains.

When a student comes to the clinic he is given a series of tests designed to identify his specific reading disabilities. No possible cause of reading deficiency is overlooked: provision is made for psychological evaluation, testing for visual and auditory difficulties, and social work services. When the need is indicated, services of neurologists, pediatricians, and other specialists are utilized.

Not all students who are referred can be accepted: usually 45 children are served by the clinic at a time. Preference is given to students who have the greatest need, who have had previous clinic experience, and/or who come from schools that do not have remedial reading teachers.

The four clinic teachers work with groups of three or four students for 1 hour daily, 5 days a week. In special cases they give individual tutoring. Based on the testing information and a complete file which is maintained for each child, activities and materials which will best meet his needs are selected by the teacher. All available commercial materials are reviewed for this purpose, and the teacher may also prepare special materials such as tapes, booklets, language master cards, or written exercises. In addition to activities in clinic sessions, the

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teachers also assign readings for children to do at home alone and with their parents. The guideline given teachers in devising instructional programs is "Be flexible!" Materials are chosen which fit the child's learning style and which help him with the skills he needs. If a particular approach is unsatisfactory for the student, it is soon changed. A child's self-confidence and the experience of success are important, and materials which fail to help a student are generally not used beyond a period of 1 week.

Clinic classes are also used to develop and demonstrate teacher training techniques and to experiment with new techniques in remedial reading instruction.

For those students who are referred to the clinic and tested but are not selected for remedial instruction, the clinic makes recommendations for remediation to their regular classroom teachers. This service is open to all school systems, both public and private.

INSERVICE TRAINING

ECRI places major emphasis on the inservice training of persons who develop reading skills in children. It trains not only teachers and reading specialists but also principals, administrators, and even parents from the Rocky Mountain States. ECRI workshops, conferences, classes, and special programs are designed to teach these groups about developments in reading theory and new techniques of instruction.

Short-term workshops account for a major portion of ECRI's efforts in teacher training. Over the 3-year period from 1966 to 1969 more than 60 such workshops, lasting from 1 to 5 days, were held at the Center or in area schools. Summer workshops were also held. It was estimated that over 487,000 students were served by the teachers who attended the workshops. The summer workshops involve teaching small groups of children from the Salt Lake City area, focusing on different areas of reading instruction and giving teachers practice in new techniques to use in their classrooms in the fall. Since research has shown that innovative methods are more likely to be practiced when more than one teacher within a school is trained in those methods, the Center has experimented with training several teachers from one school. To ensure the use of new techniques in the classroom, the

Center has also used a followup program in which teachers returned once or twice a month to develop more fully the methods learned during the summer. During another summer, an experiment was made to determine how effectively training programs could be disseminated from a central source by using five separate but integrated workshops which extended over 6 weeks and included extensive contact among participants in the various programs.

Some of the topics covered in ECRI workshops have been critical reading and listening skills, reading inventories and diagnosis techniques, behavior management, microteaching, the Initial Teaching Alphabet, children's literature, and testing. Significant gains in progress have been made by the students of ECRI-trained teachers. For example, some title I students advanced .8 year in reading during I year, perhaps not very impressive until one realizes that their maximum previous growth had never before exceeded .5 year. Such growth by students indicates that ECRI's work with teachers is indeed having an impact where it matters most.

Other training programs carried on by the Center include a project as short as a single day--the State Day in Reading--and one as long as the 6-week Rocky Mountain Reading Specialist

Leadership Conference. The State Day in Reading Instruction and Innovative Media has been sponsored by the Center since 1967, in conjunction with the Utah State Board of Education and the International Reading Association. The day includes activities designed for teachers of reading from the preschool to the adult and higher education levels. There are sectional meetings, speeches by nationally known educators, publishers' displays of new materials, and ECRI tours.

The Rocky Mountain Conference, operated since 1966 by ECRI and the University of Utah, trains prospective reading specialists for leadership roles. Participants return to local districts and help in establishing effective reading programs designed to meet particular needs and based on the best research and materials available. Formal courses, offered through and carrying several hours of graduate credit in education from the University of Utah, are a vital part of the program. They include classes in programed instruction, diagnosis and treatment of reading disabilities, application of linguistics to reading, and educational supervision. The Center awards stipends to those participating in the Conference. Over 500 applications are received each year, but the number admitted must be limited to 20.

A PROGRAM FOR PARENTS

ECRI's commitment to helping children by training those who influence their development of reading skills has led to the logical but often neglected technique of training the parents. One training program offered to parents at the Center had two major purposes: (1) to show the parent how he could reinforce basic reading instruction at home and (2) to help the parent develop behavioral management techniques with the child.

The Center asked the parent to observe his child through a one-way mirror as the child was being taught a reading lesson by a regular Center teacher. The techniques were discussed, and then the parent attempted to teach a similar lesson to his child by modeling the teaching behaviors he had observed. While the parent taught his own child in a one-to-one situation, a videotape was made through the one-way mirror. Later this tape was reviewed by the parent with a Center staff member.

Another parent program initiated by the Center was the Fathers' Reading Program. The teachers wanted their students to see men reading and to realize that reading is important to men. In this program fathers and even grandfathers of children were encouraged to come to the Center and read to the children during classtime.

Staff members of the Center are enthusiastic about their work with parents. A study made by the Center revealed significant improvement in the reading performance as compared with that of pupils whose parents were not trained.

RESEARCH PROBES READING DEVELOPMENTS

Although ECRI is only 5 years old, it has fostered a great deal of research both within and outside the Center. Fourteen Master's theses and 13 Ph.D. theses dealing directly with programs of the Center have been completed.

During 1965-66 ECRI personnel completed an experimental evaluation of its parent-training program. Although the research showed that this program was very effective, the formalized parent-training program has not been continued by the project.

A program for evaluating teacher effectiveness is also being developed at the Center, using research data on the prediction of reading gains as correlated to student IQ. Staff researchers have gathered and analyzed these data over a 5-year period, comparing gains made by students in seven different basal reading programs. Results indicate that no single reading program

tested is outstanding. Not too surprisingly, they also found that students with higher IQ's tend to succeed and those with low IQ's tend to fail in reading achievement. Here again, results point to the particular problems of the Center's original target group, the poor readers who were not being reached by most school programs. With a concern for the failure of low-ability students in reading, the Center has derived from the detailed data a prediction equation for reading progress of students at various IQ levels. This has enabled staff members to devise a simple method for identifying new remedial techniques that really work. The staff observes teachers whose low-ability pupils show gains above their predicted levels according to the equation. These observations should yield information on the types of teacher behavior which are responsible for differences in effectiveness. Several factors have been identified to date, and others are still being evaluated.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM TESTS "RIGHT TIME" FOR READING

A major study was begun at the Center in 1968 in which five classes of 3- and 4-year-olds were introduced to 3 hours a day of highly academic instruction.

One of the major goals of the project is to do a cost-effectiveness study to ascertain the most beneficial time for

introducing the academic skills to students. The only break the students had was a snack-time which was used as a language experience to discuss the various foods the students were eating. The academic program was structured so that it provided a variety of rapidly changing experiences. Initially the activities were combined into 10-minute blocks; then gradually they were expanded to 15-, 20-, and 25-minute blocks of activity. The main instructional material used in this program was the SRA Distar Program. Some of the purported results are an increase in pupil IQ (Peabody Test) of approximately 20 points in the first year and the elimination of a great many behavioral difficulty problems.

In subsequent years new groups of experimental and control students will be added to the project. For 1970-71, there are approximately 330 students in the program.

HELPING TO SPREAD INNOVATIVE INSTRUCTION

In an attempt to make the results of research and development at ECRI and elsewhere widely available to those concerned with the teaching of reading, the Center maintains an extensive circulating and reference library, a newsletter, and other informational services. Circulation of materials has reached 87

percent of the 25,154 cataloged items. A complete catalog of available materials has been compiled in a document called *Library Resources*. It lists equipment, periodicals, professional books, films, records, kits, games, and over 6,500 children's books. The latter were graded by the Spache Readability Formula and the Dale-Chall Formula for Predicting Readability.

The ECRI four-page newsletter contains information about the Center's materials, training methods, and reading-related research. It informs teachers about effective classroom practices and aids, gives educators a medium for publicly commenting on current practices and innovations in teaching reading, and helps educators keep abreast of the many innovations in teaching techniques, materials, and educational philosophies. Current newsletter circulation is 7,000.

Other materials disseminated by ECRI include videotapes and films of exemplary teaching practices, ECRI reports, and various papers and information related to reading programs.

In all of its many activities, the Center is working to improve reading instruction. By offering testing services and remedial

instruction, it helps students in the Salt Lake City area. By providing training programs, it assists teachers in the Rocky Mountain States and, through these teachers, it helps many students. By conducting research and publishing its results and information about reading, ECRI aids educators throughout the Nation.

Specific inquiries can be sent to:

Dr. Ethna Reid, Director
Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction
2870 Connor Street
Salt Lake City, Utah 84109
(801) 484-5261

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

The following documents, prepared by and available from the Center, describe its operation:

"Summary Report," Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction (Summer 1969), mimeographed, 12 pp.

How To Read, ECRI (brochure describing Center)

Highlights of the IRA Pre-Convention Institute II, Boston, Mass., Set Title: Critical Reading and Listening. $1.75

Granite School District First Grade Reading Study, Myra H. Castner, Dr. Gabriel Della-Piana, Michael Hogben, and John E. Allen. $1.75

1968 Directory of Special Services for Children in Utah. $1

An Interim Report of the Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction, July 1, 1968, $1, 81 pp.

Library Resources, the book listing materials available from ECRI's library, is available for $6.40 including postage

Numerous pamphlets are available from ECRI at no charge.

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MODEL PROGRAMS--Childhood Education

This is one in a series of 34 descriptive booklets on childhood education programs prepared for the White House Conference on Children, December 1970. Following is a list of the programs and their locations:

The Day Nursery Assn. of Cleveland, Ohio
Neighborhood House Child Care Services, Seattle, Wash.
Behavior Analysis Model of a Follow Through Program, Oraibi, Ariz.
Cross-Cultural Family Center, San Francisco, Calif.
NRO Migrant Child Development Center, Pasco, Wash.
Bilingual Early Childhood Program, San Antonio, Tex.
Santa Monica Children's Centers, Calif.
Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction, Salt Lake City, Utah
Dubnoff School for Educational Therapy, North Hollywood, Calif.
Demonstration Nursery Center for Infants and Toddlers, Greensboro, N.C.
Responsive Environment Model of a Follow Through Program, Goldsboro, N.C.
Center for Early Development and Education, Little Rock, Ark.
DOVACK, Monticello, Fla.
Perceptual Development Center Program, Natchez, Miss.
Appalachia Preschool Education Program, Charleston, W. Va.
Foster Grandparent Program, Nashville, Tenn.
Hartford Early Childhood Program, Conn.
Philadelphia Teacher Center, Pa.
Cognitively Oriented Curriculum, Ypsilanti, Mich.
Mothers' Training Program, Urbana, Ill.
The Micro-Social Preschool Learning System, Vineland, N.J.
Project PLAN, Parkersburg, W. Va.
Interdependent Learner Model of a Follow Through Program, New York, N.Y.
San Jose Police Youth Protection Unit, Calif.
Model Observation Kindergarten, Amherst, Mass.
Boston Public Schools Learning Laboratories, Mass.
Martin Luther King Family Center, Chicago, Ill.
Behavior Principles Structural Model of a Follow Through Program, Dayton, Ohio
University of Hawaii Preschool Language Curriculum, Honolulu, Hawaii
Springfield Avenue Community School, Newark, N.J.
Corrective Reading Program, Wichita, Kans.
New Schools Exchange, Santa Barbara, Calif.
Tacoma Public Schools Early Childhood Program, Wash.
Community Cooperative Nursery School, Menlo Park, Calif.

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